

TWO-FISTED LIBRARIANS

#4

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FEATURING!

*The Greater New York Library and
Archive of Superheroics*

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The Birth of Dr. Broken Spine (Super Villain Nemesis of Librarians Everywhere)

By Jennifer Met

Librarians, librarians just like you, have it coming. Yes, I am hell-bent on world domination in general. Yes, I will take revenge on my enemies and naysayers first. But after these two items, “Rid the world of librarians” is next on my bucket list.

“What did librarians ever do to you?” you ask. Plenty. Boy, oh boy. Plenty. My face is curling just thinking about it. My eyes twitching in rage like in a Looney Tunes parody. My teeth grinding. My fists clenched. Smoke coming out of my red, red ears. Clichés, as everyone know, are only cliché because they are so often true.

Back to the story at hand. Librarians. A terrible breed. It all started ten and a half years ago...

I was born “Astoria E. Booker” in the first floor bathroom of the Aurora Public Library. Strike one. The librarians all stood around dumbfounded as my mother pled for help. Sure, one guy looked intently at the computer screen for a few minutes before offering to place an interlibrary loan for “An Idiot’s Guide to Childbirth.”

“It should be available in four to six weeks. Just fill out this request form. It’s okay to put ‘zero’ in the ‘amount willing to pay’ box. Only put more if you are actually willing to pay, as once the book comes, even if you don’t pick it up, you might be charged a lending library’s fee. And make sure your phone number is up to date, because that is how we will reach you when it comes.”

This may sound ridiculous. What would she need with the book after today? But my mother disagreed. There was lots of useful information that she used during the birth of her favorite child, my

brother, the librarian. But that is a different story. Back to my story...

As my mother cried out between another contraction, a girl, a page in GAP jean shorts and a Metallica t-shirt, gleefully presented a baby names book.

This too, may seem ridiculous, as I was to be named after my mother's favorite superhero, Diana Prince. However, she took the name book and looked up the meaning of my would-be name. Worried I would be violent, she reconsidered. Unlucky for her, I am violent anyway.

A circulation worker yanked the telephone out of my mother's trembling hands and directed her to the payphone across the street. And no, they could not make change.

This too, was a blessing, since my mother would have only called my father, the fool. And this is the last thing any of us needed.

Finally, a security guard/circulation guy asked her to leave. Her water had broken and water ruins books. Makes their pages wrinkly and stuck together. Plus, she was making the other patrons nervous. A sleeping homeless man grumbled into himself in the chair by the new releases. A girl on a cell phone was yelling a conversation all the way from the stairwell. A crowd of unescorted, rowdy boys ran by and knocked my dear mother clear off her feet. Yes, she was making them nervous.

Yet, they were right. A library was no place for the miracle of birth. She waddled toward the door, but didn't get far. I was already halfway into this world when she ducked into the bathroom stall. And this was my first breath of air on this earth. A librarian had come into the bathroom to change clothes before biking home. She saw my mother, took off her glasses, and rolled up her sleeves. "I am here to help you!" she yelled.

"My hero," my mother sighed. Strike two.

You may be wondering why this is strike two. My mother was so grateful that she named me after the intruding witch. "Astoria." Story for short. Story Booker. I am scarred for life. It is like the son of a butler being named "Jeeves." I am destined to be a librarian, the thing I hate most in this world. A librarian, just like my brother.

Well, I won't have it. I will burn your puny libraries to the ground! When I am older, I will vote your stupid funding bills down. Yes, I am she, every librarian's worst nightmare, "Dr. Broken Spine."

"Yes, yes dear," you are saying. When I had read all twenty books and gleefully returned my summer reading log for my bookmark, you just laughed. "This is a J1 book. Not a J2. It doesn't count." You snatched the bookmark from my hands and gave me a book about cats. Strike two. I am no cat lady.

And now, today, strike three. You have not commented on my super villain books. You forgot to write down my due date so I will keep the books forever. You did not say "have a nice day" and were not able to recite the library's mission statement by memory, not that I asked. You supplied Jimmy Wilkins, my sworn enemy, with a science book containing the information he needs to melt my ice gun. Worst of all, you called my brother to pick me up. You are my secret nemesis.

But I will bide my time. I will check out your stupid book on cats just so I can learn how to pet one like a Bond villain. I know your secret identity, but you do not know mine. I am just a random patron to you. This will be your downfall. You will help me find the information I need to destroy you, you silly woman. Even as I stand here telling you this plan, you help me find a book on building ice guns that can defeat Jimmy Wilkins' countermeasures. All in the name of freedom of access to information.

My library card says Astoria E. Booker, but I am Dr. Broken Spine, age ten and a half. Watch for me in Part II. I am a lifelong learner and I will take over the world.

THE GREATER NEW YORK LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE OF SUPERHEROICS

By Ean Henninger

“So, you’re our new team member in the flesh—well—body—sorry, that was a normalist idiom. Sensitivity training is still catching up. But Digital Resources Coordinator? Great position! I’d love to have it if I didn’t already like management so much. We were really impressed by your cover letter, so happy you decided to accept the position.”

“As far as we know, we’re the only superhero library-archive in the multiverse. Of course, it seems like the multiverse is changing every other year, but for now we’re very happy. Our director was sick of working the LoC beat, convinced some of the profession’s billionaire genius philanthropist types that a central library and archive would be a positive thing for the heroic types as a whole—presidential libraries, why not one for superheroes, you know?—and here we are.”

“Sorry if I talk a lot here, it’s just—I love the place. You know, our mission—well, you got that in your cover letter, didn’t you? Making superheroes more accessible to the general public, powered and non-powered alike, am I right?”

“Anyway, let’s start with the tour.”

“We’re just off the public-facing part of the library, which is mainly for books and interfaces with the parts of our collection that are digital or digitized. You’ll be working with collection management to push some of that content—not until you’re all trained and settled, but of course you have a talent for processing information, don’t you? You’ll be spinning interactives into the holoplatforms in no time.”

“Now, through here are the researcher and staff areas. You won’t have to do much with authentication, since our IT guys have already got the system going, and Royson here is very good at spotting

shapeshifters and illusionists—it's all right, Royson, new hire—but just remember to flash your card like...so."

"This hall goes to the Event Rooms and Auditorium—you saw the ad about our upcoming symposium? Right, that's where that sort of thing gets held. Getting Richards away from his studio was a coup, let me tell you."

"Right off here is our basic Documents room—all the things that don't require special care. I have a soft spot for it, as it's where I started here. You'll be working a lot with them as more and more traditionally hard-copy things are digital these days. But for the historical stuff, it's still a great department. We've got some things from groups from the West Coast and Great Lakes that we're very proud of, plus flight inventories for test pilots who've ended up in space, the Beyond Corporation's original marketing plan...well, look at me talk! But the digital side is very important, which is why we've hired you."

"Okay, just for example—right now we've got someone from Empire State who's interested in the blogs and tweets of current supers before they came out or were outed, and we just haven't been able to help him as much as we'd like. So that'll be part of your work, then."

"Transparency is a key part of our organization, of course. We stay well away from the registration side of things—you remember how the last attempt to compile a database turned out, and if someone tells us they don't want their big purple pants in our storage, we listen."

"Speaking of pants, through there is Wardrobe—would you believe people have started donating old costumes to us? I guess since there's no real museum yet—but if there was, we'd have an entire wing for the '90s."

"Now, this airlock leads to Special Collections. That's where we archive superheroically significant items that have come into our possession. A lot of it is anything too bulky or radioactive to really fit in Documents, and then of course we have the alien artifacts and

maps of other dimensions that don't always come to us in purely physical form."

"It's tricky to keep all this stuff in one place, you know. We get a lot of our solutions from the penitentiary system, honestly. There's more pressing demand at places like Riker's, more incentive, you know, but a rotating anti-energy grid works just as well for inert multiphasic crystals as it does for mutant terrorists."

"We try not to hold anything that anyone would want to steal—like we'd want a techno-organic virus sitting around where just anyone can get it?—but some people are just unmitigated collectors, you know? All the really good stuff gets snapped up by private bidders or held back for the public good, but we're working out a partnership with the guys that clean up after the fights in case anything good comes through. Anyway, the Board is all agreed that we don't want to be a target for supervillain attacks, any more than we have to being near this city, anyway—though there are some donations back in the sub-basement that haven't been sorted through yet."

"Here's the break room—let us know if you need anything besides coffee, happy to accommodate you—and here's the elevator to the server racks and digital lab."

"To tell the truth, we're very pleased that someone with your, uh, profile applied to work here. Not that this is a diversity hire—you've already met Royson, plus we have a guy in administration—but we think having people all over really helps to strike a good balance between human and powered—or cyborgs, you know, aliens, whoever's got citizenship..."

"Uh, can I ask why you're jacking into the elevator panel? And is that a—is that a halberd? Wait, what are—"

"Another killer robot? Oh, fu—"

Sasha Clocke

By Allison Sullivan

CHAPTER ONE

"I know that I had them at some point, but I just can't remember. I have a special shelf and everything, I can't for the life of me figure out why they're not there."

The long-legged woman sat before the beat-up wooden desk, her ankles crossed beneath her chair. Her conservative dress hung loosely around her litling frame, making her seem paradoxically larger and smaller than she really was. She rubbed her forehead with her slender fingers as if to massage the memory back into her mind. On the opposite side of the desk, Clocke sighed. There were still too many cases like this walking in to her office lately. Clearly, the word hadn't gotten out yet.

"Listen, lady," said Clocke, leaning forward and causing her office chair to emit a high pitched whine, "I'd love to be able to help you with that, but I don't really do that anymore. Not since..."

Clocke trailed off into a memory. The shelves rocking, the books falling, Emilio's muffled scream.

"But Ms. Clocke, if I don't find the books, I'll be finished. The librarians are ruthless. The fines will bankrupt me."

"I don't know what to tell you, Miranda. I don't do that anymore. I'm out of the library game. For good."

"But they told me you were the best."

"Emphasis on 'were,' lady. Next time you get involved with a murder or the mob, I'm your gal. But the library? They're out of my reach now."

Miranda stood up shakily on those long legs. Her eyes were cast downward and tears were climbing to the tips of her voluminous eyelashes. "But where do I go? I don't have anywhere else to turn." As she looked up, a teardrop broke loose from her watery gaze and ran down her thin, pale cheek. Her blue eyes, heavily lidded, pleaded for Clocke's help, but as much as she wanted to, she couldn't risk facing books again.

"All I can suggest is that you re-trace your steps," said Clocke with a lilting sigh, "and they're usually in the last place you'd look."

Miranda choked back a wet sob and walked out of Clocke's office. She slammed the door shut, making the empty wooden shelves lining the small dingy room shudder. Some dust from those shelves filtered into the light of the single lamp in the corner of the room. Dust that until recently clung to the old leather covers and yellowed pages of the books Clocke loved. Loved, and lost.

* * * * *

Sasha Clocke was welcomed into the bar with the familiar tinkling of a cheerful bell hanging from the lintel of the heavy oak door. The regular patrons of the Cloak and Dagger Public House ignored her entrance, but Carl, the steadfast bartender, gave her a familiar nod. Clocke sighed as she shook the ice and water from her wavy salt and pepper hair. It was late November, and the city was still trying to decide if it was fall or winter. She removed her heavy grey wool coat, revealing her short but curvy figure beneath a charcoal dress almost identical to her coat and hair. The colour she allowed herself was in her tall forest green boots, which she rubbed, half-heartedly, on the mat near the front door.

After arranging her coat on a hook on the wall, she slid into a seat at the bar. Carl, wiping a bar glass with a once-white towel, trod heavily toward her. He gave her a rare smile, his eyes tired beneath his heavy greying brows. "Beautiful day out, eh Clocke?" he quipped. Sasha gave a snort at his too-obvious joke.

“Real bikini weather,” she shot back. “I’ll have a cup of tea. Strong.”

Carl turned and put the glass down in front of her. He reached beneath the bar and produced a bottle of single malt scotch. He poured a generous double into the glass, and pushed it toward Sasha. She accepted with a wry smile. “You know me too well, Carl.”

“You never drank tea, even when you were working with those book jockeys,” he growled. “First one’s on the house, Clocke.”

Clocke had settled some fines for Carl years ago, making her first drinks at the Cloak and Dagger a common gratuity. But lately, they hadn’t been much help. Without a book in her hands, she didn’t know what to do with them. These days, just to keep her hands busy, she drank more than she used to. Or at least that was what she liked to tell herself.

Clocke sipped at her drink and allowed the gentle music and conversation of the Cloak and Dagger to wash over her. Jeremy was on the piano tonight, picking out chords and progressions of a common and crowd-pleasing variety. Charlie, the bar’s fluffy white cat, slept in his usual place on top of the old upright piano, his tail wagging lazily in time with the music. He had been at that bar since Clocke could remember, and though he must be reaching senior age, he could still take down most rats without breaking a sweat. That is, she thought, if cats sweat.

Clocke’s eyes settled on a man at the end of the bar. He held a book loosely in one hand, but was staring off into space, clearly digesting some passage he had just read. Clocke sighed enviously, but balked at the telltale label on the book’s spine. Library property.

It is a cliched saying, but in the city of New Alexandria, information was power. As an institution full of books and the precious cargo they carried, the library was one of the most powerful entities. It was true that the librarians, guardians of the library, would share their information, the collective knowledge of their vast enterprise. But

that sharing was heavily regulated and though nominally free, could potentially come with a fairly high price. The most common of these was in fines for late or lost materials. The library considered every book vital, every volume integral. An item stolen and an item mislaid were considered one in the same. The other powers in the city, the police force, the government, were all in on the library take. Serious circumstances could arrive to anyone who abused the library's generosity. Treading lightly with their materials was always encouraged, if not enthusiastically enforced.

Clocke had become involved with the library as a private contractor. A private investigator, really. Usually, she worked with people who had offended the library somehow – misplaced a book or incurred some more unusual fine. Clocke was a born finder. Easy cases, the books were behind sofas or bookshelves, left on bus benches, recovered from lost and founds. More difficult ones involved theft, pickpocketing or crooked librarians with some kind of axe to grind. Her record wasn't perfect, but it was pretty good.

Clocke let her mind drift as she sipped her drink. Occasionally, she would be contracted by the library itself. It was rare for them to contract out. They usually had enough librarians under cover to get into most problems. Go underground to find the books or shake down holders of the more intensive fines. Emilio was undercover. She remembered the first time he was in her office, admiring the personal collection of books that lined the walls. His olive green eyes ran over the titles on the spines, flickering back and forth while he tried to explain the case to her. He couldn't focus. Clocke let a smile cross her lips as she remembered that. He never could focus on anything if there were books in the room. He had a constant catalogue in his head. When they were together, that was the only time she ever saw him stop mentally cataloguing.

A sudden dissonance from the piano brought the bar back into sharp relief. The cat had tired of his spot and jumped onto the keys. Jeremy gave him a gentle nudge and struck up a new tune. The drink in her hand was empty and too quickly. Clocke sighed. It was going to be one of those nights.

“Can I get you another?”

While she had drifted, a strange man had slid himself onto the bar stool beside hers. Carl looked suspiciously from his post at the end of the bar. Clocke lifted her eyes and found them staring into black pools. He was young, his jet black hair and blue tips styled straight up and back as was the current fashion for the wayward youth of New Alexandria. His face was angular - sharp cheekbones, sharp chin, sharp nose - youthful, clear skin stretched over his pointy features. The eyes betrayed an intelligence as sharp as his face, but something playful behind that. Almost mischievous. His outfit was the perfect complement to his hair. A black, fitted motorcycle jacket with blue piping clung to his muscular shoulders. He looked distinctly out of place in the cozy, yet dingy bar with its cozy, yet dingy clientele.

From the other end of the bar, Carl gave a look to Clocke as if to say “this guy bothering you?” Clocke looked from the young man to Carl and gave him a comforting nod. “Sure thing, kid.” He raised two fingers to Carl who pulled himself from his spot, filled Clocke’s glass, and filled a fresh one for the kid.

He took a tentative sip and coughed at the burning of the whisky. Clocke and Carl shared a private mocking smile while he caught his breath. Sasha sipped in silence while the stranger sputtered awkwardly. She was curious, naturally, but decided to play it aloof and distracted. With the difference in their ages, this was unlikely to be a come-on. But then again, you never know.

The kid recovered, his eyes brimming with tears and his cheeks red at their tips. Sasha gave him a look of bemused, yet muted interest. The kid tried to maintain his cool. “Cheers,” said Sasha with a slight grin.

They sat for a minute, listening to the gentle jazz rhythm from the old piano. The young man turned the glass slowly on the bar, considering another sip, but weighing the further embarrassment that might follow. Sasha decided to throw him a bone.

“So what’s a nice kid like you doing in a place like this?” she said lazily, disappointed with her own cliché. The corner of his lip lifted into a crooked smile. “Hey, this is a hip spot,” he joked, “all the guidebooks say so.” Carl rolled his eyes and disappeared into the back room. He was the kind of bartender who went out of his way to make sure the Cloak and Dagger wasn’t a hip spot and sure as hell didn’t appear in any guide book. An awkward silence fell once again. He tried another sip at his drink, this time more successfully. No coughing, only a wince.

“Not to your taste?” asked Sasha.

“No, more of a white wine spritzer kind of guy. I’m Peter,” he said. “Peter Lim.”

“Well, Mr. Lim, we both know that you’re not here for the atmosphere. Nor to hit on older women.”

“Then you don’t know me at all, Ms. Clocke,” he retorted, with that sly, crooked smile.

So this was a targeting meeting. Clocke has suspected so, but her curiosity had won out for a moment. Her patience, however, was now beginning to wane.

“I don’t usually entertain unsolicited visits from clients, especially after hours,” shot Clocke, the laziness leaving her voice. She re-adjusted her seat on the chair, straightening her back and turning the barstool to face Peter head on. He was taken aback by the sudden shift in tone and his smile dropped.

“I’m sorry to approach you like this,” he stammered. “I know it’s unorthodox, but we have a rather... unorthodox situation on our hands. Coming to your office represents certain risks that we aren’t willing to take.”

“And who is this mysterious ‘we’?” ventured Sasha, her eyes trained his face, looking for the telltale clues of dishonesty.

"I can't tell you that," Peter started.

Clocke stood up quickly. The barstool scratched on the wood and turned to leave.

"Yet." said Peter urgently. "I can't tell you that... yet."

Clocke looked at him square in the face. "Listen, chum, I keep things above board, here. I run a legitimate business..."

"Ms. Clocke, with all due respect," interrupted Peter, "we both know that is not entirely true."

Clocke's eyes narrowed. She noticed that the music had stopped. Jeremy's fingers were lifted from the keys, and it was clear he was listening for signs of drama. Charlie the cat lifted his head and turned lazily toward them. Clocke sat back down on the stool and picked up her glass. She took a sip. "Alright, Lim, you've got my attention."

Peter sighed, diffusing the tension in the room. Jeremy began playing again, the moment passed. Clocke stared at her whisky. Peter was considering where to begin. "Well?" she prodded.

"There are some... changes. Innovations, really, in the works when it comes to the way we think. The way we learn and share certain things."

"What kinds of things? Guns? Drugs? Mob got something new on their hands?"

"Information," mumbled Peter. "The way we share... information."

Clocke's pace quickened. She could feel her heart squeeze in her chest. She struggled to maintain a calm exterior.

"If you are suggesting what I think you are suggesting," she hissed through clenched teeth, "I don't have anything to do with that."

"Listen," he said urgently, "I know you are no friend to the library, and I know they've been no friend to you. That's why I'm here." She gave him a sidelong glance. His face was sincere, his dark eyes pleading. "These innovations, they could change everything." He leaned closer. "Everything."

Clocke turned to face him once again. "I don't know what you expect me to do, Mr. Lim, but I am an old bird at this point. I can't stop innovation, I can't stop progress."

"Ms. Clocke," said Peter with a breathy laugh, "you've got me all wrong. We don't want to stop the progress. We want to help it along. We want to make change happen."

Clocke fell silent, her gaze fixed on Peter's face. He raised an eyebrow; he knew he had her interested now. Turning away, he downed the rest of his whisky in a single gulp and hissed at the sharp taste. Standing up, he fished a wallet from his back pocket. When he stood, Clocke got a better look at his figure. He was built like a boxer - not big, but compact and strong. He was of an average height, but still much taller than Clocke. Clocke noticed, as he fished through his wallet, that his hands were soft and long fingered. Carl had reappeared silently and took up his usual post at the end of the bar. Peter placed a bill on the counter. "Keep the change," he said to Carl. Carl nodded.

Peter picked up a motorcycle helmet from the stool next to him. Like his jacket and his hair, it was a shiny black with blue stripes. He tucked it under his arm. Clocke said nothing, not wanting to reveal how curious she was. Peter gave her a sly smile and held out his hand, offering her a small paper card. Clocke reached out cautiously, and took the card. "Give it some thought," he said, his smile widening, "and get in touch when you're ready." And with that, he climbed the shallow stairs out of the bar and disappeared into the frigid night.

Clocke looked at the card. It was a light card stock with a glossy dark blue finish. The front had an intricate logo of white lines bending around each other, but all connected at the centre. Underneath the

logo there was an address: 101010 Moore Ave. As she stared at the logo, a motorcycle revved outside, then faded from earshot. She turned the card over.

In tiny, white print the card read: "Information wants to be free."

* * * * *

TWO FISTS NOT ENOUGH? NEED MORE ACTION?



Issues #1-3 are still available!

More info at

<http://twofistedlibrarians.blogspot.ca/>

Issue #5 Coming Soon!

Send submissions (writing, comics, art, recipes, knitting patterns, etc.) to
twofistedlibrarians@gmail.com

The Hamaker Home for Wayward Librarians

By Matthew Murray

Für Elise echoed throughout the now empty house. It still surprised me from time to time when it happened, not that it happened too frequently these days. The song indicated there was someone at the door, though I wasn't expecting any callers. Maybe it was that pizza I ordered last week finally showing up.

I walked through the piles of boxes and bags towards the front door. The house had acted as storage for years. In addition to the countless books left by prior inhabitants there were super-8 movies in the closet, reel-to-reel audio tapes in the bathroom, and who knows what else cluttering up the space. All uncatalogued of course.

Upon opening it I saw the now familiar visage of a local police officer as well as two of my wards, both looking disheveled, awkward, and embarrassed.

"I believe", began the officer, "that these two belong to you."

With a sigh I agreed that yes, the two sorry looking specimens that had been escorted to the door did indeed count my place as their current abode.

"What were they up to this time?"

"Same as usual: drinking in public, breaking and entry, attempting to reorganize and catalogue people's books."

"I'll talk to them officer, thank you for bringing them back." I wondered why they never catalogued the books where they lived, but I didn't think now was the best time to bring this up.

Continued on 3rd page following.

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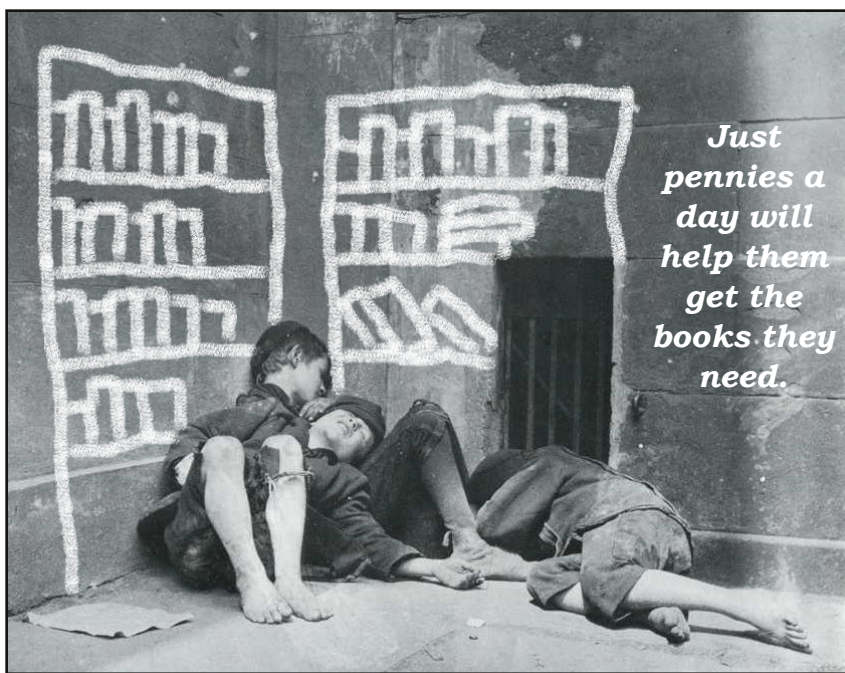
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SUPER-RUSH ORDERS (50¢ extra)

I escorted the two of them inside, wondering what it was that our world had come to. Thousands of jobless librarians with nothing to do, desperately attempting to improve their resumes any way they could, legal or otherwise. You see them hitchhiking across the continent, sleeping in shantytowns, and standing on street corners with signs saying "will give book recommendations for food". I felt pity for them; and so I allowed some of them to stay in my grandparents' old house where currently close to a dozen slept, huddled together on the floor, or on the many mattresses which now filled most of the house.

Clearly it was time to take out that ad in the paper.



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get the
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need.*

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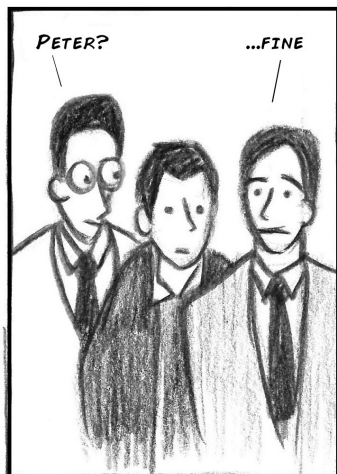
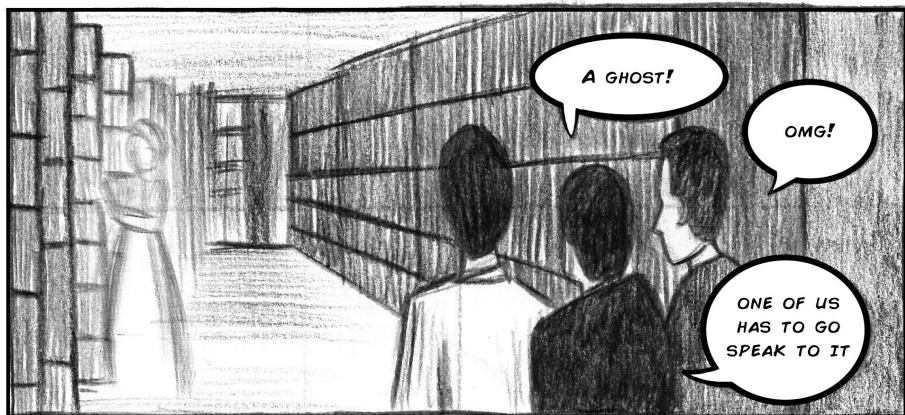
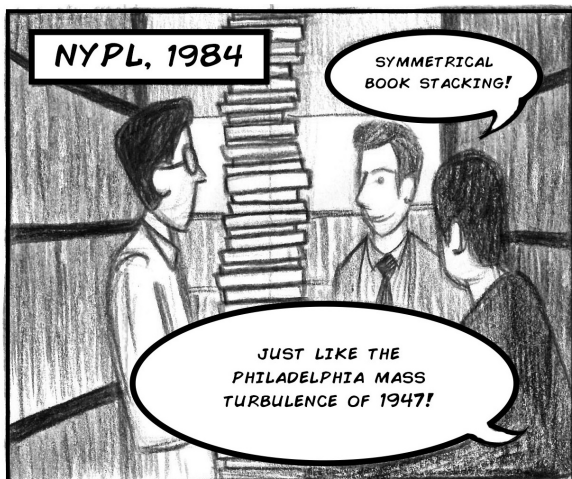
Your donation will help keep these ~~wretches~~ unemployed librarians clothed in cardigans, supplied with coffee they will spill on themselves, and provide them with old catalogue cards which they can use as nesting material.

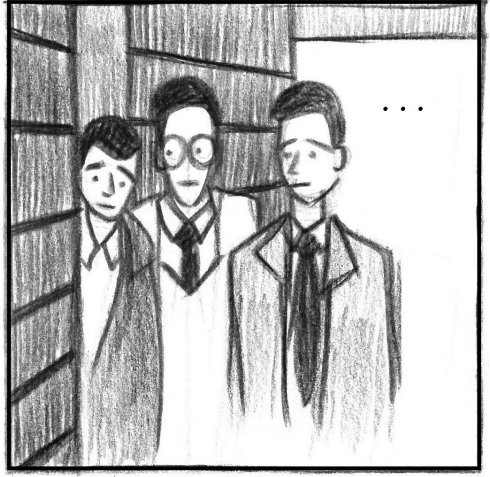
Call 1-800-LIBRARIAN to donate today.

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
ELEANOR
TWITTY,
LIBRARIAN

BY ANNIE GAINES

GHOSTBUSTERS, SUPERNATURAL,
WELCOME TO NIGHTVALE
AND ALL ASSOCIATED CHARACTERS
BELONG TO THEIR RESPECTIVE
OWNERS, OBYI.





80 YEARS EARLIER

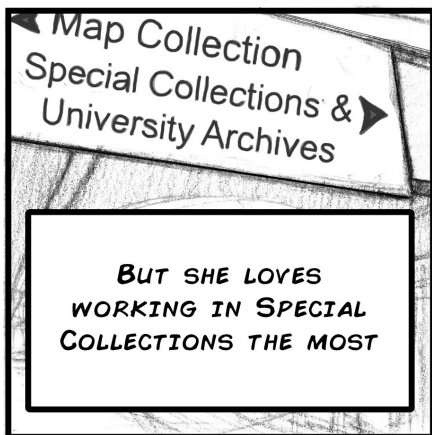
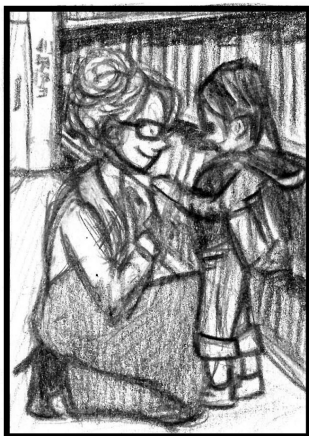
**FRESH OUT OF
LIBRARY SCHOOL,
ELEANOR TWITTY IS A
NEW LIBRARIAN
AT NYPL**



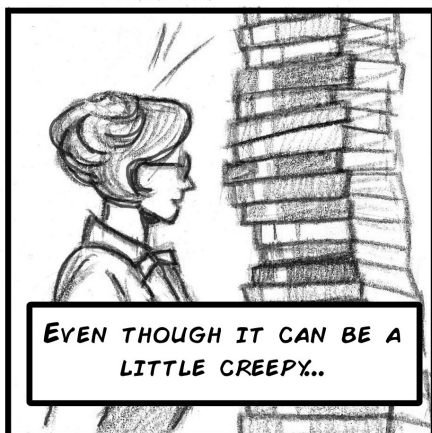
**SHE LOVES
BROWSING
THROUGH THE
BOOKS**

**LEARNING NEW
THINGS**

**AND HELPING
PATRONS**



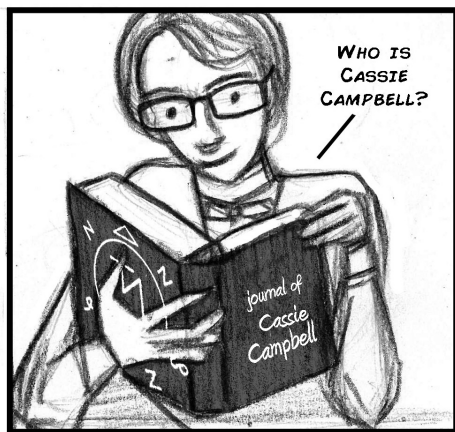
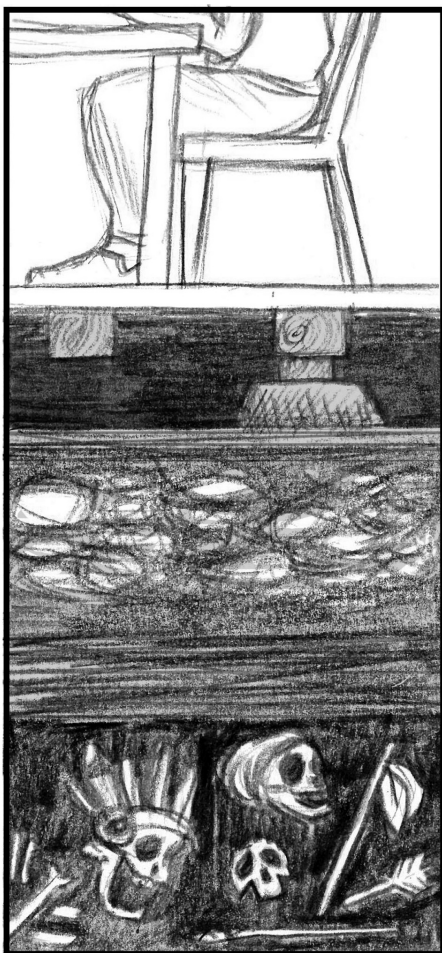
**BUT SHE LOVES
WORKING IN SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS THE MOST**

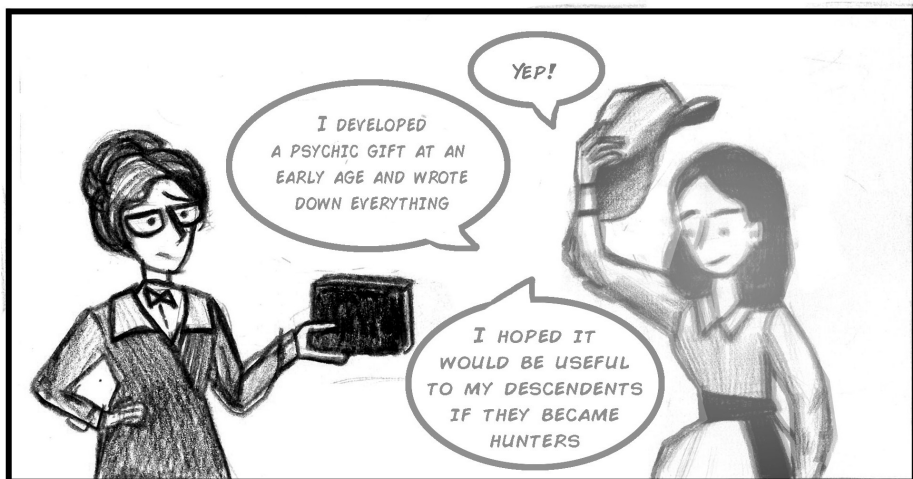
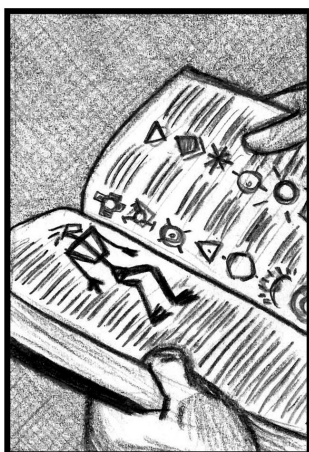
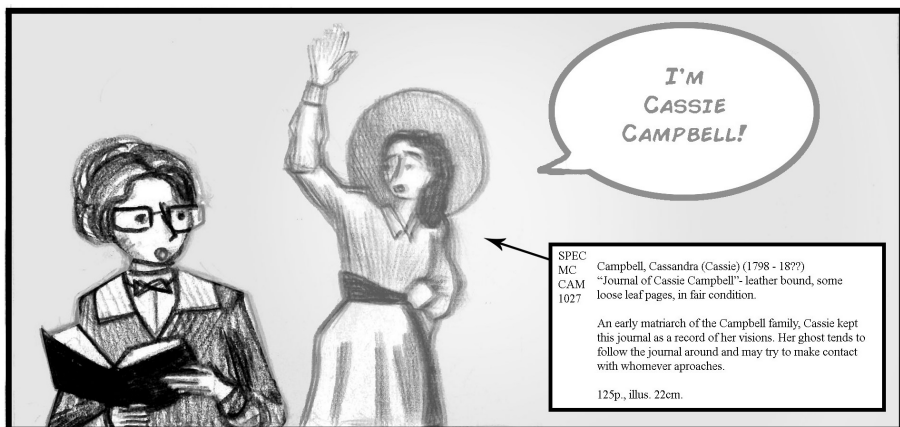


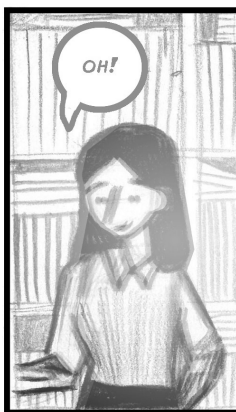
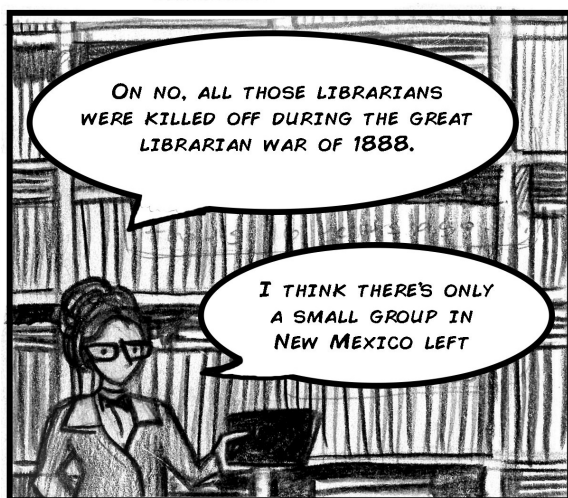
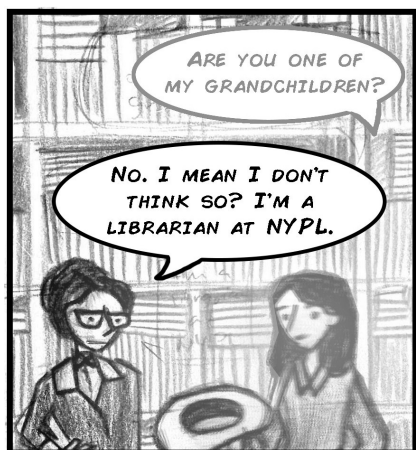
**EVEN THOUGH IT CAN BE A
LITTLE CREEPY...**

DOWN IN THE
BASEMENT, ELEANOR
IMAGINED WHAT MIGHT
BE IN THE GROUND
BENEATH HER,
WHAT THE MEN
HOLLOWING OUT THE
SUBWAY TUNNELS
MIGHT FIND

SHE LIKED TO
SURROUND HERSELF WITH
OLD THINGS WHILE
THE CITY EVOLVED
AROUND HER
SO QUICKLY







LIBERTY AND THE LIBRARIAN

By Adena Brons

"Listen Mack, I gotta good one for you."

"Yeah, what's this one about? It ain't about the twins that are actually four people, is it? I heard that one."

"No, this is new."

"All right, shoot."

"Gonna buy me a drink?"

"Fine, what'll y'have? Jimmy, two scotch and sodas. All right, let's have it."

"Ahh that's fine stuff. Here's the tale:

"Couple a months ago I was hired by this big city chap to track his wife. She was disappearing off in the afternoon and he didn't like it. Figured she was playing him false. Lovely missus with hair like the sun in the sky and legs that just wouldn't quit.

"So he hires me and I set a tail on the lady. Now, I ain't one to follow a lady with my hat pulled down over me eyes and a trench coat pulled tight. That ain't respectful. I follow 'em nice and friendly."

"Sure, real friendly."

"Don't mix business with pleasure, Mack. No one ever teach ya that?"

"All right, so what's the story?"

"So's I'm following this lady and like the gent says, she goes off every afternoon, dressed to the nines and don't come back til dinner. She

takes a taxi downtown to the central Library. Big building, lions out front, respectable, y'know?"

"I dunno, can't trust 'em book jockeys. They got systems. They find stuff."

"Yer nervie, Mack and I get that. But ain't no harm in a high-to-do lady visiting the Library in broad daylight is there? Naw, there ain't. So's I go back to the gent and tell's him what I saw. He's still suspicious. His wife tells him she's visiting the Librarian. Something about writing a book, or a family tree. But he's still suspicious. Tells me to keep on it."

"Well the gent's got greenbacks so I do I little digging. At first I thought maybe it was a little hanky panky with the Librarian, caught in the stacks kind of story. Turns out something fishy is goin' on but that ain't it: the Librarian's a bird!"

"So it ain't the hanky panky. But why can't a dame be a librarian? I admit it's a little unorthodox but now them suffragettes have got 'em the vote, every dame's after a job."

"You're a liberal man and I'll give ya that, Mack, but that ain't what I said. The Librarian ain't a dame. She is a bird. An avian. Born with wings, feathers and a beak, so please yer uncle."

"Get outta here! Wouldn'ta bought you that drink if I'da known I was getting this cock and bull story."

"True as the Virgin's cloak, I tell ya. In charge of the Library, a great flying bird!"

"So what's the dame's story?"

"I'm gettin' there. Mack, what's the symbol of this here our great nation?"

"Liberty?"

"Close but not. What signifies liberty and freedom to all who look upon it?"

"Why, the eagle!"

"You got it, Mack. Proud symbol of our country. Found on every state document, in the history books, woven into the very texture of our glorious past. And it's all been put there. It's all been added by the Librarian and birds of its kind, workin' in the knowledge profession to change the past. And this dame was helping.

"A little digging uncovered a dirty avian past of her own. Before her arrival on our free and beautiful soil, and subsequent marriage, she'd spent considerable time working in the Imperial Library in Munich...under the supervision of the Reichsadler!"

"A dirty Kraut!"

"You got it Mack. This dame was workin' to overthrow our liberty-loving nation. She and her kind failed in Germany but they were trying again here. With the people primed by history to follow any Accipitridaen leader, we'd be headed willy-nilly into feathered facism!"

"Sonofa- So what happened?"

"Brought it to the feds. International nest like that's above my pay grade. Last I heard, the Librarian's been cooped up somewhere. I doubt he'll fly free."

"And the dame?"

"She disappeared before they got to her. Funny thing, so did her husband, the gent that hired me. At least, they say he disappeared. But I heard they dragged a body from the river shortly thereafter so I ain't so sure."

"Criminy."

"You said it."

"Another drink?"

Everything you ever
wanted to know
about

DEMETRIUS

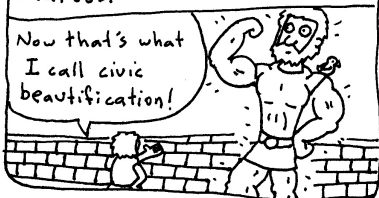
PHALERUS

But were afraid to ask!

Demetrius lived from ?- 280 BC
and was an orator and
disciple of Aristotle.



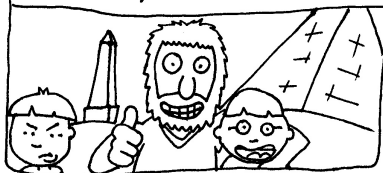
He was also the governor of
Athens from 317-307 BC.
He was honored with 360
statues.



But when he was impeached by
his enemies, they were torn down
and made into chamber pots.



He was taken in by his friend
King Ptolemy of Egypt. Ptolemy
had two sons. Demetrius backed
the wrong one.



He was thrown in jail when the
other son became King. Eventually
he died from a snake bite.



After the impeachment but before
the snake bite, Demetrius ran a
little idea he had past Ptolemy.



Demetrius got his mentor, Aristotle,
to donate his personal library.



Ptolemy's son dictated that everyone entering Alexandria must surrender their books and scrolls for copying.

Most of this will be returned to you when we have a chance to copy it. However, I think I need a little alone time with this scroll.



Eventually, the library at Alexandria has 700,000 items, and, oh yeah, its own god, Serapis.

We combined the Greek god Hades with the Egyptian god Apis.

I HAVE JUICE!

He tests really well with the Soccer moms. He's this year's Zeus.



The destruction of the library is popularly attributed to Julius Caesar in 48 B.C. However there is no conclusive evidence as to how or when the library was destroyed.



Surely, for this great deed history will remember me with a tasty salad!

Today, Demetrius' dream lives on in a new \$220 million dollar facility on the site of the original library.

Excuse me. Could you please direct me to the naughty scroll collection? Thank you.



News From the Stacks

Item! Issue #3 contributor Colleen Frakes had her new graphic novel *Prison Island: A Graphic Memoir* released in September by Zest Books. Check it out! More info at tragicrelief.com.

Item! Series 4 of the popular ACTION LIBRARIANS trading cards are now at the printer and should be available later this year.

Item! You keep asking, and we keep saying "no!". *Spicy Librarian Stories* still doesn't have a publication date. We've been having trouble find the right content, but some day...

Item! *The Phantom Librarian* reaches issue #50! What better way to celebrate than by spinning popular backup feature *Hypatia Lorde, Library Scientist* into her own new title!

NO. 7421		LIBRARY	
PATRON RECORDS			
PLEASE RETURN TO OWNER IF BORROWED OR FOUND.			
DUE	RETURNED	DUE	RETURNED
3636			10025 2.

Dear Editor,

My enjoyment of "A Holdlist Named Desire" (TFL Bi-Annual Annual #3) was completely ruined on page 12 panel 5, when the left hand of plucky page Paige Paisley inexplicably turns purple for one panel. A simple coloring error you say? It is a shade of purple that appears nowhere else in the book. More importantly, it is the exact shade of purple of the gloves of Professor Princess, Guardian of Knowledge in the 24th Century! Did you nincompoops just spoil the end of The Consortium Crisis? I've spent the last year alone in my parent's basement talking to no one specifically to avoid spoilers and you do this? To me? Get ready for a squickstorm in my next Boolean Hooligan/Tyranothesaurus x-over slashfic. My vengeance will be epic!

Sir Melvin Anorak

Well sir Melvin you got us. That was indeed the glove of Professor Princess. However, as our raucous

readers no doubt already know, The Consortium Crisis ended in a way not even you could have predicted! We hope you liked it, and be on the lookout for a new 24th century adventure soon!

Two-Fisted Librarians,

I hesitated to even write this letter upon learning of your recent relaunch, but having decided that you show no signs of going back, I feel obligated to speak out.

While restarting this publication under a new name may conceivably be "likely to bring new readers on board" and "a broad reimagining [...] in keeping with modern pulp trends," some of us enjoyed this publication, and indeed became its most loyal readers, precisely because of the continuity that you have all but thrown out the window with this relaunch.

When will we see another episode in the Adventures of Mark Wreckard? Must we seek the end to the Jungle Librarians' struggle against the interlirary loan sharks in

other publications? Instead of rewarding long-time fans, your editorial staff seems largely set on starting all-new serials, or worse, one-off stories of barely one page. Until such time as you see fit to rectify these complaints, I will not be purchasing, only be borrowing the title from my local library.

On a happier note, I would like to congratulate you on the newfound quality of your artwork, which has improved remarkably.

Intentionally,
Severely Disgruntled in Hoboken

Woah, hold on there SDIHN. Relaunch? When did that happen? Perhaps you're thinking about some other, lesser, publisher of library related pulp fiction. Mark Wreckard is still appearing in every issue of Library SuspenStories. And while we've had to stop Jungle Librarian Action for now, you can find the continuation of those stories in Six-Gun Librarian!

Dear Editor,
In issue #2 of TFL the portrayal of the Lavender Librarian was completely out of character in comparison to their appearances in SERIALS Team 7 #43! What was your writer thinking? They would never have revealed their secret identity to The Ignoramusapien,

even if there was a patron waiting in line to be served.

Also, is there any chance The Mould Spore will be appearing in these pages in the near future? They are my favourite villain.

Sincerely,
Otto von Bookmark

*Well Otto, blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah.*

I just wanted to drop you a note to say how much I enjoyed reading the stories in "Two-Fisted Librarians". They inspired me to write down some of my librarian experiences. Keep up the great work.

Brian Fulton

Brian, you claim to have written some stories. But where are they? Not here! You (and everyone else) should send your submissions to twofistedlibrarians@gmail.com.

Please.

Next issue:
Part two of How to Steal a Book in 1930s Chicago (part one was in TFL #2 back in 2014). Plus an assortment of all-new serials and one-off stories. That's a Two-Fisted guarantee!

Biogr- ophies



Adena Brons

Is the secret horror in the shadows. Given super-human powers by a society from an alternate history Athens, she must must destroy a dangerous magical artifact protected by a crumbling civilization of sentient robots and mutated humans.

Annie Gaines

Is a gung-ho blood lich officer who is the best at everything she does. While practicing tarot in France she is touched by destiny. Soon she encounters deception from zombie pirates and begins a relationship with a chemical experiment gone wrong.





Ean Henninger

is a discordant, yet insanely good-looking vampire. On the run from the law of the lightning artificers, he must use courage to avoid the threat of the land sharks. It seems that knowing the solution to everyone's problems isn't the benefit he thought it was.

Jennifer Met

is The Wanderer. Cursed by rogue malice-witches she was rebuilt as a cyborg after a terrible accident. Now she's a time travelling cyber-samurai, but no matter what, she mustn't forget about "the feather"



Matthew Murray

is a hard-nosed detective who can't seem to track down his reincarnated love. In a world ravaged by climate change and contaminated by toxic food, he must prove his worth to the dusk pirates, one mystery at a time.

Robert Perret

Is a friendly sentient computer who has it all together and is well on his way to inventing hover-boards. However, due to the recent chemical weapon induced pague, he will doubtlessly face a tragic death and be eaten by starving animals.



Allison Sullivan

is an antisocial hypno-priest of beauty and truth. Based out of a secret glade on a Caribbean island she spends her days working on extravagant scientific experiments. However, her miserly ways lead to her buying suboptimal parts which soon lead to catastrophic failure.

pseudo- graphics



OCTOBER'S

"Bright Blue Weather"



*A good time
to Read Zines!*